



Message from the Executive Director

TRANSFORMATION IS NOT BORN BY ENVISIONING THE FUTURE, BUT BY CREATING THE FUTURE YOU WISH TO HAVE.

And we've been creating since 1985, when the McCormick Center was founded on \$600 and a mission of building the leadership capacity of the early childhood workforce.

Despite nationwide interest in early childhood education, work to improve it is often disjointed and focused solely on teachers. Early care and education program directors, elementary school principals, and other administrators play an instrumental role in supporting education professionals in strengthening their core competencies. These leaders are critical for creating a work environment in which professionals thrive. Early childhood leaders need to have the knowledge and skills to supervise educators who are capable of working with the children and families in the settings they lead.¹

That's where the McCormick Center comes in.

We shift the paradigm.

Research indicates there is a positive relationship between the quality of administrative practices and the quality of children's learning environment in both family and center-based programs.²

Leadership development and director credentialing are effective ways to elevate professionalism and improve program quality. Directors with higher levels of education and specialized training in program administration are more likely to support the professional development of their teaching staff, secure and maintain program funding, and achieve center accreditation³—all of which help improve overall program quality and provide an environment where children can thrive.

Collaboration is the model of our success.

Our innovative, collaborative, and research-based approach to early childhood leadership uniquely positions us to transform the field. As we implement initiatives that strengthen the leadership capacity of early childhood educators, the McCormick Center

serves as a model for promoting collaboration with different funding sources, education and human services agencies, professional development organizations, and institutions of higher education.

Our mission

We are dedicated to building the leadership capacity of the early childhood workforce through:

- **Professional development** to increase the knowledge and competency of early childhood leaders.
- **Evaluation** to measure and improve the quality of early learning programs.
- **Research** to enhance the knowledge base of key workforce and professional development issues.
- **Public awareness** to promote greater understanding of the critical role of early childhood leaders in the provision of quality services for children and families.

We envision a world where every **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER** has the knowledge and skills to administer high-quality programs that nurture lifelong learning in **CHILDREN**, promote healthy child development, strengthen **FAMILIES**, and create a great place to work for **STAFF**.

JOIN US.

Sue Offutt

SUE OFFUTT, PH.D
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



¹ Findings from the Institute of Medicine report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A unifying foundation*.

² Lower, J. K. & Cassidy, D. J. (2007, Winter). Child care work environments: The relationship with learning environments. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 22(2), 189—204.

³ Fowler, S., Bloom, P. J., Talan, T. N., Beneke, S., & Kelton, R. (2008) *Who's caring for the kids? The status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois—2008*. Wheeling, IL: McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University.

Instructional Leadership

INSPIRING EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Administrators of early childhood programs play a critical role in leading administrative practices that promote healthy organizations, but in powerful ways they also serve as instructional leaders for teachers.

Building upon their foundational knowledge in child development, administrators inspire effective teaching and learning. By establishing a culture of continuous quality improvement, creating positive work climates, and ensuring organizational conditions for professional growth, administrators guide teachers toward instructional excellence. Inspired teachers inspire and engage young children. That's a sign of a high quality program.

Our experience with instructional leadership runs deep.

The McCormick Center was founded on principles that embody what it takes to build *A Great Place to Work*, a book co-authored by our founder, Paula Jorde Bloom, and two of our lead trainers, Jill Bella and Ann Hentschel.

The insights shared in this book and their second title, *Inspiring Peak Performance: Competence, Commitment, and Collaboration*, became the building blocks for a partnership with the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Together we support school- and center-based instructional leaders as they move up in the ExceleRate™ Illinois quality improvement initiative. To help ensure all aspects of the state QRIS embraced these concepts, we created an online module to support Illinois Quality Specialists in their work with programs around continuous quality improvement.



See our contributions to the Institute of Medicine report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, on pages 439-442, 500-501, and 538-542.



133

participants attended a two-day institute on *Inspiring Peak Performance*.

Of them,

23

distinct job titles represented the variety of professionals in the role of instructional leaders.



184

attendees at the Leadership Connections™ national conference participated in sessions focused on Instructional Excellence.



30

years have been dedicated at the McCormick Center to helping early childhood leaders create organizational climates that inspire teachers to excel.



5

times we've presented at key national education policy forums including the White House Summit and the Clinton Global Initiative.



Family Child Care Leaders

RAISING UP AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED SECTOR OF THE FIELD

Family child care providers play a critical role in the care and education of our young children and represent a significant portion of the early care and education workforce. Our mission to build the leadership capacity of the field encompasses these entrepreneurs and small business owners. Without strong business and professional practices in place, quality care cannot be sustained and their program doors cannot stay open. We support these practices through training initiatives, resources, and the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* (BAS), a tool co-authored by Paula Jorde Bloom, and our Director of Policy Initiatives, Teri N. Talan.

Taking the Lead: A Family Child Care Initiative, launched in spring 2015, is another answer. This kind of specialized training in program management and business growth strategies offers administrators opportunities to practice essential knowledge and skills to advance education and business goals. Among other objectives, the program aims to build a sustainable peer learning team for providers who are typically isolated in their respective businesses. Sixteen participating providers explored how maintaining successful business practices fosters respectful, positive relationships with children and families.

Family child care networks are critical to elevating home-based care for children and families. Therefore, we **elevated our partnership with the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)** by adding Eva Daniels, president of NAFCC, to our advisory board. Eva brings with her a strong voice among the largest network of family providers.

TAKING THE LEAD:
INSPIRED BY **23 YEARS**
OF PROVEN OUTCOMES
THROUGH OUR **TAKING**
CHARGE OF CHANGE™
INITIATIVE.



Watch Taking the Lead participants share their experience at bit.ly/McCormickCenterTTL



236
family child care providers and those who support them attended face-to-face BAS trainings.



1440
hours of program management and business growth strategies were provided through the Taking the Lead program.



457
online training hours delivered through the new Getting Ready for the BAS modules.



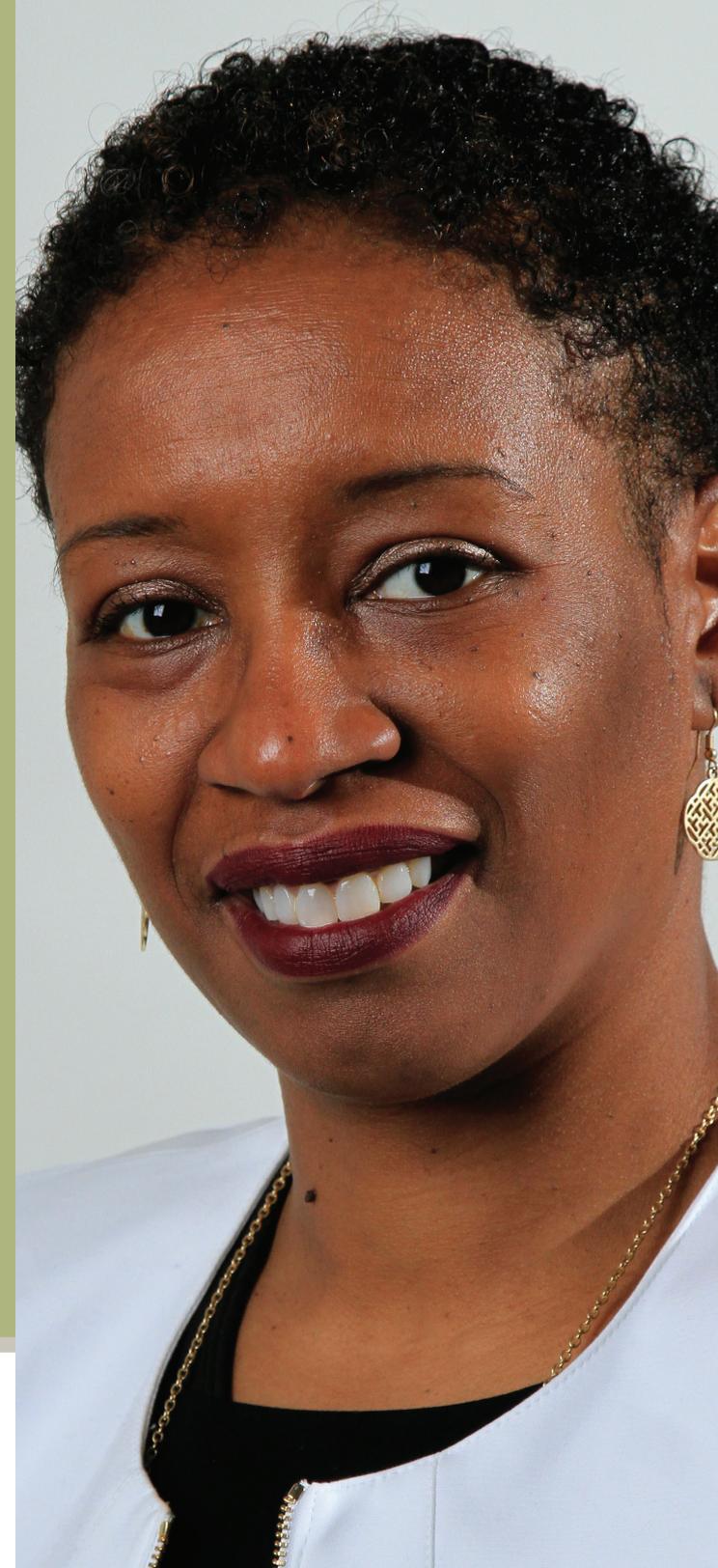
“Family child care providers want to get involved in these deeper trainings. Now we’re finally being recognized and given that opportunity to grow and take advantage of learning opportunities to help our programs excel.”

— 2015 Taking the Lead participant



15.8%
of child care slots nationwide are provided in family child care environments.¹

¹ Child Care in America: 2015 State Fact Sheets. From: <http://cca.worksmartsuite.com/GetThumbnail.aspx?assetid=675>



Infant/Toddler Program Excellence

STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS SERVING OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN

The experiences of the first three years of life profoundly impact a child's chances of success later on. Yet many early childhood administrators lack knowledge of what high-quality interactions should look like in the infant/toddler classrooms within their programs. And, as a result, infant/toddler teachers often lack the support they need to provide optimal experiences for the babies in their care.

To bridge this gap, the McCormick Center launched *Links in a Chain: Quality Improvement Strategies for Infant and Toddler Classrooms*. This initiative, designed as a part of the ExceleRate™ Illinois quality rating and improvement system, promotes high quality language and interactions in infant/toddler classrooms. Through a peer learning model, *Links in a Chain* brings together early childhood administrators, their infant/toddler teachers, and technical assistance specialists to help programs link research-based assessment to teaching strategies for children zero to three. Working together, participants gain the knowledge and skills to shift paradigms for babies around the state.

While administrators provide leadership for teachers and their infant toddler programming, administrators also provide leadership for parents to promote well-being in the home. Our partnership with Zero To Three™ did just that. We piloted their *Knowledge and Know-How: Nurturing Child Well-Being* 8-module online education program. A cohort of providers received essential core content and knowledge needed to leverage their relationships with the parents of very young children to raise overall quality of care.



Collaborate with us to develop a peer learning module in your state by e-mailing us at McCormickCenter@nl.edu



684
infants/toddlers were potentially impacted by their teacher's participation in the *Links in a Chain* initiative.



256
hours of online infant/toddler-focused training provided in partnership with Zero to Three™.



"This training helped me find new ways to help staff be more aware of children's feelings and to modify their techniques and responses."

— 2015 *Links in a Chain* participant

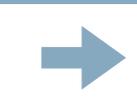


> 3 million

estimated infants/toddlers are served in early childhood education settings nationwide¹.

¹Based on data from: U.S. Census Bureau, *State Characteristics Datasets: Annual Estimates of the Civilian Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013*. www.census.gov; and Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services FY 2014 Preliminary Data Table 9 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children In Care By Age Group (FY 2014). <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/fy-2014-preliminary-data-table-9>

National Leadership Conference



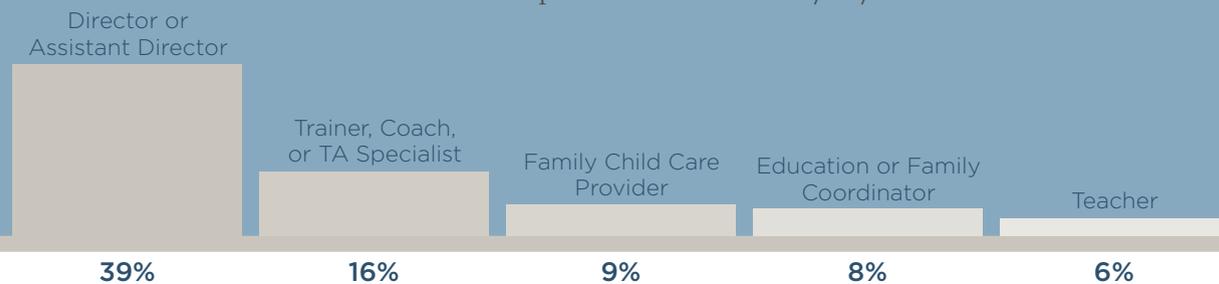
INSPIRING CURRENT AND FUTURE LEADERS TO EXCEL

Administrators want what's best for the children and families they serve. So why do so many end up leaving the field? Burnout and isolation are two of the culprits, and a national conference is part of our answer. While many early childhood education conferences exist, McCormick Center's Leadership Connections™ national conference focuses on the needs of administrators. This year, in its 15th year, 556 professionals attended.

Leadership Connections is packed with notable thought leaders in the field and plenty of sharing and networking opportunities. This year's highlights included:

- 7 session tracks including:
 - Early Childhood Education Policy
 - Instructional Excellence
 - Leadership, Coaching, and Mentoring
 - Program Assessments
 - Program Management
 - Social and Emotional Development
 - Technology
- The Leadership Colloquium and Public Policy Forum encouraged the discussion of provocative questions, the exchange of ideas, and intimate conversation with field leaders.
- Joan Lombardi helped us lean forward toward a national early childhood policy that embraces collaboration at the community, state, and federal levels.
- The most sought after topic was Social and Emotional Development, which included a pre-conference session by Kay Albrecht.

2015 ATTENDEES COMPRISED OF:



27 states were represented at Leadership Connections™ this year.



93% of attendees said they believe their organization will support them in applying the knowledge or skills gained.



94% of attendees felt professionally "renewed" and "re-energized."



"Every year Leadership Connections reorients me toward mindfulness, helps me feel connected to the wider field, and grounds me so that I come out of my day-to-day and remember why I do what I do."
— 2015 Leadership Connections attendee



99 attendees wrote pledges to advocate for young children's success.





See how we support systems in your state:
McCormickCenter.nl.edu/national-presence/

Quality Improvement Systems Building

We're here to support your statewide efforts to raise the bar of quality in early care and education. We have experience working with a range of quality initiatives and can support the unique needs of your state.

IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS AND TARGETING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

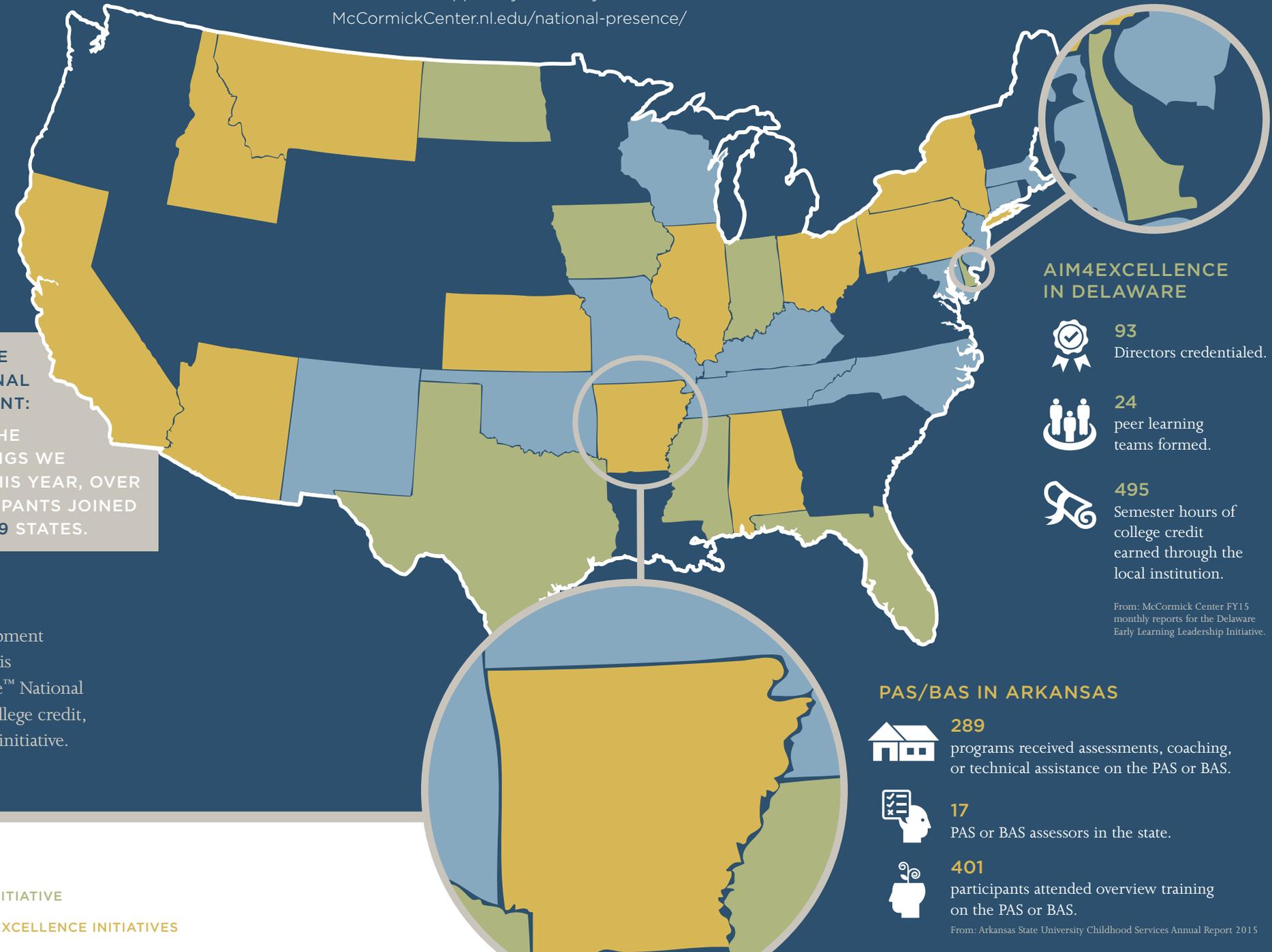
Administrative practices measured by evaluation tools strongly influence the quality of care and education children receive in their early childhood classrooms. Co-authored by Paula Jorde Bloom and Teri N. Talan, the *Program Administration Scale* and *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* are valid and reliable tools that measure these leadership and management practices. We work closely with quality initiatives around the country to systematically collect, analyze, and use data to answer questions about the effectiveness of practices and programs. While state administrators have used this data in a variety of ways, the goal is the same—to improve program quality.

HARNESSING E-LEARNING TOWARD A NATIONAL DIRECTOR CREDENTIAL

The job of the early childhood administrator is complex, yet in many states few professional development experiences exist to support administrators in strengthening the knowledge and skills needed for this important role. Through an innovative e-learning platform, the McCormick Center's Aim4Excellence™ National Director Credential helps leaders build these competencies. Simultaneously, participants can earn college credit, fulfill qualifications for program accreditation, or move up within their state's quality improvement initiative.

NATIONWIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
THROUGH THE 30+ TRAININGS WE OFFERED THIS YEAR, OVER 700 PARTICIPANTS JOINED US ACROSS 9 STATES.

- PAS/BAS INITIATIVE
- AIM4EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE
- PAS/BAS AND AIM4EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES



AIM4EXCELLENCE IN DELAWARE

-  **93** Directors credentialed.
-  **24** peer learning teams formed.
-  **495** Semester hours of college credit earned through the local institution.

From: McCormick Center FY15 monthly reports for the Delaware Early Learning Leadership Initiative.

PAS/BAS IN ARKANSAS

-  **289** programs received assessments, coaching, or technical assistance on the PAS or BAS.
-  **17** PAS or BAS assessors in the state.
-  **401** participants attended overview training on the PAS or BAS.

From: Arkansas State University Childhood Services Annual Report 2015

Quality Rating and Improvement

LEADING THE WAY IN ILLINOIS

As knowledge of the importance of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) spreads nationally, a few states stand out as leaders in effective implementation. One is Illinois. The McCormick Center has been a key collaborator for our home state since it began its QRIS in 2007.

Quality Improvement

A priority in our state QRIS is to engage and empower program leaders. The McCormick Center has played a critical role in helping define and develop strategies for continuous quality improvement toward meaningful, sustainable program change.

Quality Assessment

Our exceptionally strong team of assessors is nationally recognized for its consistency, accuracy, and high-level reliability. Our assessment sessions at the ERSI national conference and the National QRIS Meeting opened engaging dialogues on insights and strategies about how our state assessment team remains “right and tight.”



112
technical assistance specialists were trained on an intentional coaching approach to support program leaders in quality improvement.



686
quality assessments conducted in classrooms and family child care homes.



25,615
hours of professional development provided for technical assistance specialists.



728
hours spent by our assessment team training to reliability with assessment tools.

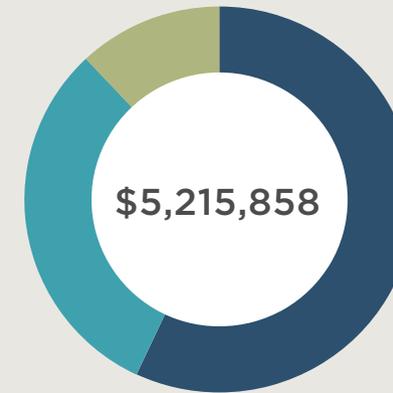


12,106
estimated children enrolled in classrooms assessed by the McCormick Center.

Financials

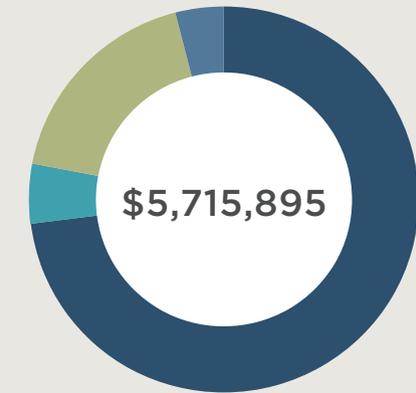
FY15 JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015

TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURES



57% Personnel
31% Program Services
12% Operations

TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE



73% Contracts
5% Grants
18% Fee for Services
4% Investment Income

Thirty Years of Leadership

1985

With a \$600 Membership Action Grant from NAEYC, Dr. Paula Jorde Bloom launches the Early Childhood Professional Development Project.

1986

The first organizational climate assessment specific to early childhood work settings is published.

1988

A Great Place to Work is published and distributed as a membership benefit to all NAEYC members.

1990

A major grant from the Head Start Bureau supports leadership training leading to a master's degree for 34 Head Start directors in Chicago.

1991

Blueprint for Action is published. A centerpiece of the Center's training, this book provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of organizational change in early care and education programs.

1993

Taking Charge of Change™, the Center's flagship leadership training program is launched.

1994

The Center becomes a partner in the McCormick Foundation's Focus on Quality initiative supporting center accreditation in Chicago.

1995

The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training program is launched with 32 directors receiving coursework leading to a master's degree and on-site technical assistance to achieve center accreditation.

1996

With an organizational development grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Early Childhood Professional Development Project becomes the Center for Early Childhood Leadership with an expanded vision that includes policy and public awareness activities.

1997

The Center hosted a statewide symposium of policymakers to explore the feasibility of a director credential. Center faculty spearhead the work of developing core competencies for the credential.

1998

The first issue of The Director's Link, the Center's quarterly newsletter, is published.

2000

The Center conducts a comprehensive study of the early childhood workforce in Illinois, resulting in the publication of *Who's Caring for the Kids?*

2001

Leadership Connections™ national conference is launched.

2002

In partnership with INCCRRA, the Center conducts five cohorts of The Next Step, an advanced leadership training program designed to prepare Professional Development Advisors for the state's emerging professional development system.

2003

The Center published *Zoom: The Impact of Early Childhood Leadership Training on Role Perceptions, Job Performance, and Career Decisions*.

2004

The *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) is published. Designed to measure, monitor, and improve leadership and management practices in early childhood programs, the PAS has been embedded in quality improvement initiatives across the country.

2005

\$3.6 million in gifts from the McCormick Foundation and the Josephine and John Louis Foundation supported the renaming of the Center.

2006

Three initiatives in Chicago take flight: The Next Generation of Chicago Leaders supported seasoned directors in developing leadership succession plans; Coaching for Results developed a cadre of skilled instructional leaders; and Go for the Gold helped directors achieve their Illinois Director Credential (IDC).

2007

Illinois launched Quality Counts QRS and the McCormick Center assumes the role of conducting all on-site classroom and program quality assessments required for the star-rating system.

2008

Research supporting the reliability and validity of the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* (BAS) is completed and the instrument is published. An update to the *Who's Caring for the Kids* early childhood workforce study is also published.

2009

The McCormick Center launches Aim4Excellence™, a national online director credential that utilizes cutting-edge technology to deliver engaging content.

2010

With an expansion in personnel to carry out its initiatives, roles and reporting relationships are restructured. Dr. Sue Offutt joins the McCormick Center as Executive Director.

2011

The McCormick Center's assessment work expands as it takes on the state's Preschool for All quality monitoring. A grant from the Pritzker Early Childhood Foundation supports the development of an online community for Aim4Excellence facilitators. An expanded national reliability and validity study is conducted informing the second edition of the *Program Administration Scale*.

2012

The McCormick Center moves into expanded facilities at 6200 Capitol Drive in Wheeling and introduces a new logo. Online modules for Getting Ready for the PAS and Getting Ready for the BAS are launched.

2013

Illinois receives a Race-to-the-Top—Early Learning Challenge grant and launches ExceleRate™ QRIS. The McCormick Center takes the lead in providing professional development for quality specialists, infant-toddler specialists, and mental health consultants.

2014

The Center partners with the Ounce of Prevention Fund on a new initiative—Lead. Learn. Excel—to improve instructional leadership in early care and education programs. Founder and Endowed Chair, Paula Jorde Bloom, retires.

2015

A new initiative for family child care providers, Taking the Lead, is piloted in Chicago. The McCormick Center celebrates its 30-year anniversary and 15 years of memorable Leadership Connections.™

In their own words



Note: Below is a graduation speech written by an Aim4Excellence™ participant, which she shared at her cohort's final meeting.

In June 2014, I received an e-mail from Mary Jamsa telling me about a director's credential program opportunity with Aim4Excellence. I was excited. I immediately wrote back and told her I was interested.

Background

I came to this country in 2002 from Zimbabwe. My son at the time was only 3 years old and only spoke my vernacular language. I decided to work in a pre-school so I could help him ease into the new society while he was learning the new language. I never left because working with children was the most rewarding experience I had ever had.

Five years later, I left to join a Montessori school closer to home. Unfortunately the school closed, and I was left without a job. I was devastated, and the parents were, too. Because of the economic downturn, very few places were hiring. With encouragement from some of the parents, I decided to start my own Montessori pre-school. It was easy at the beginning with only four children, but as the school grew, I found myself not only dealing with children but with teachers and parents. My experience as a pre-school teacher had not prepared me for what I was facing, so when the invitation came I immediately responded.

My experience in the Aim4Excellence program

Getting into the program helped me to learn a lot. There were times I felt frustrated and felt some parents were being unreasonable to me because they had no respect for me. I would find out during our cohort discussions that the problems or behaviors of some of the parents were not unique to only me and that gave me a lot of encouragement.

My school has flourished as a result of my participating in the Aim4Excellence cohort meetings and taking the course. I now have better qualified staff than when I first started. The sisterhood I have created with the other directors is priceless. I have gained many tools that I will be using to grow my school.

Toward the end of Module 9, the instructor tells us about the concept that the Japanese refer to as Kaizen, which emphasizes "taking small doable steps in any change process, personal, or organizational." She also shares a quote from Lao Tzu, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." I have a lot to achieve in the future. I am taking small doable steps one at a time, and, with all the knowledge I have gained, I will eventually get there.

LIZZIE MAKALISA-DENNIS

DIRECTOR, HEART PRINTS MONTESSORI
TEMPE, ARIZONA

2015 Supporters

The McCormick Center wishes to thank all the individuals, foundations, agencies, and partners who help make our work possible. We look forward to continuing our partnership in transforming early childhood education SO ALL CHILDREN THRIVE.

FUNDERS

- Anonymous
- Chicago Department of Family & Support Services
- Delaware Office of Early Learning
- FDC Foundation
- Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Michael W. Louis Charitable Trust
- Robert R. McCormick Foundation
- Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande

PARTNERS

- BUILD Network
- Early Care and Education Consortium
- Illinois Action for Children
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Association for Family Child Care
- National Louis University
- The Ounce of Prevention Fund
- Workforce Solutions, Texas
- Zero to Three, National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

NATIONAL CONTRACTS

- Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children
- Corporation for the Ohio Appalachian Development
- Early Years Network, Mississippi State
- Goddard Systems, Inc.
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool
- Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota
- Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children
- Montessori Heartland Teacher Education Center, Iowa
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education (Maryland)
- Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association
- Rutgers University
- Southwest Human Development, Phoenix
- Together4Children, Texas
- University of New Mexico
- University of Southern Indiana

LEADERSHIP [M]ATTERS.

ABOUT THE McCORMICK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP AT NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

At the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, we empower individuals to build the leadership and management skills they need to create and sustain exemplary programs for young children. Through professional development, evaluation, research, and public awareness, we promote best practice in program administration. By working with states, professional organizations, and directly with early childhood practitioners, we raise the bar on program quality. Because, when it comes to early childhood education, **leadership really does matter.**

Founded in 1985, the McCormick Center builds on National Louis University's 128-year history of accomplishments in the field of early childhood education. From its founding as a vital force in the kindergarten movement of the 1880's, NLU has remained rooted in educational progressivism and dedicated to advocacy for children and social change. The McCormick Center is committed to these same ideals.

To learn more about the McCormick Center, visit McCormickCenter.nl.edu

McCORMICK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP

AT NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY | 6200 Capitol Drive | Wheeling, Illinois 60090

McCormickCenter.nl.edu | 847.947.5063

